United Nations A/65/721

General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 February 2011

Original: English

Sixty-fifth session
Agenda items 36, 52 and 60

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

Letter dated 3 February 2011 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 2 February 2011, from His Excellency Mr. Walid Al-Moualem, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic, addressed to you regarding the campaign by the Israeli occupation authorities to build new settlement units in the Occupied Syrian Golan, under the slogan "Come to the Golan".

I would highly appreciate if the present letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items numbers 36, 52 and 60.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

11-22714 (E) 080211 090211

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 3 February 2011 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

2 February 2011

I write to inform you that the Israeli occupation authorities have initiated new settlement activity in the occupied Syrian Golan. In yet another provocative step, the so-called Golan Regional Council has launched a publicity campaign for the construction of new settlement units in the occupied Syrian Golan. The campaign, entitled "Come to the Golan", provides for the distribution of 140 additional pieces of land at a cost of between $30,000 and $41,000, whereas the cost of building a home in the Golan amounts to some $270,000.

An additional 3,000 Israeli families have been attracted to the settlements in the occupied Golan as a result of the Israeli so-called Golan Regional Council settler campaign, which continued through December 2010 with the aim of encouraging Jews to settle on occupied Syrian territory. Occupied Syrian land has been given to would-be settlers through attractive offers that include one dunam of land free of charge and the opportunity to build at low cost a 150 square-metre home with a spacious garden.

The leaders of the settlement campaign have indicated that the rate of arrival of settlers has risen by 60 per cent over the past seven years and that 9,500 settlers arrived in 2000. The most recent campaign has brought the number of settlers to 140,000.

That information is conclusive evidence that Israel is moving ahead with its aggressive settlement policy in the occupied Arab territories. In so doing, it is ignoring international resolutions which condemn the continuation of settlement construction in those territories, which include the occupied Syrian Golan. The Israeli Knesset recently decided that a referendum should be held before any withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan or East Jerusalem. That decision is the clearest possible sign that Israel is disregarding its commitments and responsibilities before the international community, which require it to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories. Israel clearly has no genuine intention of moving towards a just and comprehensive peace in the region on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions and the principle of land for peace.

Israel's persistent construction of settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan has created a state of anarchy in the region that endangers international and regional peace and security.

The Syrian Arab Republic stresses the need for the international community to take genuine, responsible action to contain Israel and prevent any further infringement of the rights of the inhabitants of the occupied territories in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. Israel's actions contravene the relevant legally binding international resolutions, the fourth Geneva Convention, international law and international humanitarian law. International resolutions require settlement activities to be halted and settlements to be dismantled, and Israel must comply with those requirements.

The Syrian Arab Republic stresses that none of Israel's actions affects the legitimacy and justice of the full return of the occupied Syrian Golan, with the borders of June 1967, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and General Assembly.

We request that this letter should be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 36, "The situation in the Middle East"; agenda item 52, "Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories"; and agenda item 60, "Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources".

(*Signed*) Walid **Al-Moualem**
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic